

RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY AND BIGOTRY IN THREE NOVELS
BY BENITO PEREZ GALDÓS

by

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VITA

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CHAPTER ONE

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF SPAIN

"Spain is a Christian country in the way that Saudi Arabia is Muslim, Burma Buddhist, or Russia Communist. To the average citizen of the West, with his pagan or humanist social background, her Christianity is as exotically mysterious as any faith or fetish of ancestry."¹

Mention Spain, and the image which rises above the bullfights, the gypsies, and Don Quixote is that of the cathedrals, the churches, and the chapels—each with its special saint and shrine. Spain is a country of bells: tolling for the dead, celebrating a wedding, or announcing mass every hour on the hour. The tourist visits the cathedrals, listens to the bells, and comes away convinced that Spain is truly the most Catholic of all Catholic countries. Such a conclusion is not strange, since Spaniards have assiduously been cultivating the myth for centuries. Most of them point with pride to their history as proof of their religious tenacity.

For over seven centuries Spain was occupied by the Moors. Islamic thought, science, and art dominated practically the whole of Spain from 711 to 1009 when the khalifate of Córdoba entered a period of decadence. Even thereafter, the flame of Islam burned, though often times sporadically, in southern Spain until it was finally extinguished by the conquering armies of the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabel. With the cry of "Santiago y cierre España,"²

¹James Morris, The Presence of Spain (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), p. 78.

²Santiago—the patron saint of Spain.

the Spaniards defeated the Moors at Granada in 1492 and a reunited Spain bore triumphantly aloft the dual banners of Christianity and Catholicism.

Under the Moors there had been relative freedom of religion for Islams, Jews, and Christians alike. The Christian temper had begun to change, however, even as early as the eleventh century when the idea of the reconquest was formed. This change in temper was manifested by the Catholic Monarchs in the wholesale expulsion of Jews in 1492. And herein began the myth of Spanish Catholicism; for Spaniards were convinced that to keep the faith pure, the unpure (the Muslims and the Jews) must be expelled from the country—much as one would cut out the rotten part of an apple. Even though Isabel conceived the Jewish expulsion as a move toward unity, such action was never sanctioned by Rome.

Shortly thereafter, the conquistadores began to swarm over the newly-discovered lands of the Americas. They left Spain with instructions to offer the savages the alternatives of conversion to Catholicism or death. Later, "the Inquisition was founded and conceived as a department of state, outside the jurisdiction of the Church and its bishops. . . ."³ Spain is not, of course, the only country whose history carries the black blot of the Inquisition; but it remains unique as the country which kept religious intolerance alive for so long. The Inquisition was never legally abolished in Spain until 1820. "Thus the Spanish state, while identifying itself with the spiritual interests of the Catholic faith, did not submit to the Roman Church,"⁴ which had formally denounced the Inquisition in 1542.

³Salvador de Madariaga, Spain: A Modern History (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1958), p. 25.

⁴Ibid., p. 26.

As the Muslim star was eclipsed, so Spain, after becoming a world power, fell from her pinnacle in 1588 when the Spanish Armada was sunk by the English. There had been the dream of a Catholic world, ruled by Catholic Spain, but "the faith which Spain wanted pure and intact was not susceptible of a universal appeal,"⁵ and the dream became a legend—a part of the past on which a later-day Spain would feed.

Throughout the seventeenth century, an increasingly impotent political Spain maintained its exterior trappings of glory while within rot and decay became rampant. So, too, it was with the Church. Ostensibly, the religious enthusiasm of Spain and her people appeared as strong as ever. Numerous new convents, chapels, hermitages, and religious hospitals and schools were established. Yet moral decay was apparent even in ecclesiastical ranks, despite the efforts of the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Hermits, monks, and bishops were guilty of immoral acts, of gambling, and of misappropriating and embezzling funds. Although the religious idealism of the preceding centuries still survived in many wearers of religious garb, and in the hearts of their followers, no longer was Catholicism the vital motivating force that it had been in past centuries.

With the eighteenth century and the assumption of France as the principal country of Europe, politics became more important than religion, and Spain began the task of reorganizing the Church and curtailing its great accumulation of wealth. The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 was a definite sign that politics held first place in Spain.

"Never was a century more disastrous for a nation than the nineteenth

⁵Ibid., p. 46.

century was for Spain,⁶ for it was marked not only by chronic civil war on the political scene but also by a misguided conflict between clericalism and militarism which resulted in a relative status quo. In most other Catholic countries, clericalism is mild, but in Spain it seems almost an evil inherent in the national character. It is extremely difficult to criticize this particular evil because the Spaniard immediately jumps to the conclusion that his faith is being attacked—since in fact clericalism is a basic point of difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. Unless the anti-clerical opponent can bring forth a substitute for the religion he would displace, his case is lost before he even presents his argument. Protestantism is not really acceptable, for it is not in keeping with the stoicism and the innate pessimism of Spanish psychology. Life for the Spaniard is viewed against the backdrop of eternity; he is born to die. The theological concept of purgatory offers the Spaniard more hope than the Protestant concept of hell or heaven. Knowing the tendency of all flesh, the Spaniard can more easily accept purgatory than he can hell. Hell, he feels, is only for the truly wicked while heaven is reserved for the saints. Therefore, a priori, Protestantism is not a suitable replacement for Catholicism.

The Spaniard may cease attending Mass and receiving Communion, but he does not, generally speaking, become a Protestant. Church tradition is closely allied to social customs, as seen in the absolute authority of the father over the rest of the family, the high standards laid down for women, and the emphasis on a higher pursuit in life. "It is very difficult to discriminate between religious and moral issues"⁷

⁶ Morris, p. 81.

⁷ Diego Marín, La civilización española (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 206.

Nineteenth-century Spain was a hotbed of unrest, much of which can be directly traced to the basic conflict between the religious and secular concepts of life. The incessant civil wars and political upheavals were manifestations of social preoccupations which had been easily squelched by the old regimes that had been based on faith and authority. With a new century and new ideas, many of the old traditions were in danger. The new working classes, influenced by French thought, nevertheless allied themselves with the traditional Catholic factions long enough to drive Joseph Bonapart from Spain; the war against Napoleon (1808-1813)⁸ took on religious overtones and was seen as an attempt to preserve Catholic Spain from the invading French "atheists."

During the first Carlist War, (1833-1840),⁹ the country literally broke into two camps: the Liberals, many of them Catholic but militant anti-clericals; and the Conservatives, in the majority members of the nobility and the clergy. Throughout the country, however, the Liberals were known as atheists or freethinkers. Yet they did enjoy a certain popularity; for although Spain was a profoundly religious country, "with a religion of its own which for all practical purposes coincides with Catholicism,"¹⁰ the people were opposed to flagrant abuses by the clergy. The great wealth amassed by the various orders, the control exercised over education, and the political power used to sway the king were deeply resented. On the other hand, the truly spiritual religious

⁸French troops, led by Napoleon, entered Madrid on May 2, 1808. Joseph received the Spanish crown, and for five years war was waged to return Ferdinand VII to the throne. In April 1813, Napoleon at last ended the war by acknowledging Ferdinand as king.

⁹Carlist Wars were led by a Spanish political faction which advocated the claims of Carlos de Bourbon and his heirs to the throne of Spain. They believed in the power and absolutism of the Catholic Church and so were encouraged by the Pope to make war.

¹⁰Marin, p. 163.

orders—those which gave to the poor and spent their lives in quiet contemplation—were revered and respected by the Spanish people. Thus the entire century may be considered as one of conflict between religion and politics.

As previously stated, probably more than any other country in the world, Spain feeds on her past. Most countries look to the future, but Spain's glory lies in her past. The nineteenth century, with all its political upheavals, its inquisitiveness, and its emphasis on science never succeeded in changing the religious format of Spain. The legendary was sanctified by the daily devotions of the simple people, and they clung to their faith with a steadfast zeal. Throughout the rest of the world, such blind dogmatic faith was no longer feasible; but Spain continued to "tilt at windmills."¹¹

"Today, perhaps even more than in the past century, the Church in Spain is an inescapable reality: control over all education in the country, the powers of censorship, the bishops close to the sources of power, and its reviving prestige in the world—all put the Church at the peak of its fortune."¹² In few other countries are the religious and the temporal so fused, and religious intolerance is simply a way of life that the Spaniard does not deign to explain to foreigners. Franco has declared illegal all religious services not Catholic. Whether influenced by world opinion or Rome, he does permit, however, non-Catholic church worship—so long as it is conducted in unmarked buildings. Nevertheless, there are at present, no constitutional guarantees for religious freedom in Spain.¹³

¹¹Marín, p. 163.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Although this is an apparent paradox, this is the religious state of affairs. A religious bill is being considered by Franco which would guarantee religious freedom to those whose faith is not Roman Catholicism.

In Spain as elsewhere, the true state of a nation is sometimes mirrored in the literary production of its authors. Rarely has a country had a more able spokesman than had Spain in the nineteenth century with Benito Pérez Galdós. The internal and external struggle between politics and religion, the rivalry between the new and the old, the conflicts created by fanaticism and intolerance—these things he noted and wove into the themes of his novels. Galdós saw only tragedy ahead for Spain if she insisted on letting religious fanaticism bring stagnation to all other aspects of life. For him the evil sprang from that traditional clerical spirit which was opposed to everything new and which fomented mental inertia.

As has been pointed out, few other countries have been so influenced by religion as has Spain. Also established was the fact that many of the chronic social ills in that country were directly traceable to the Spaniard's interpretation of religion. George Wilhelm Hegel in his Philosophy of History has gone so far as to claim that "the idea of God constitutes the general foundation of a people. Whatever is the form of a religion, the same is the form of a state and its constitution; it springs from religion."¹⁴

Benito Pérez Galdós was intimately familiar with the Spanish idea of God, and he ". . . consistently attempted to see beyond the appearance of things and penetrate to a deeper reality—to answer, or at least ask, the ultimate human and spiritual questions."¹⁵

Galdós saw his people cling tenaciously to their traditional beliefs and declare all others "false." He watched as a man's religion was decided for

¹⁴ Robert O. Ballou, Ed., World Bible (New York: Viking Press, 1944), p. xviv.

¹⁵ Hugh Thomas and the Editors of Life, Spain, (New York: Time, Inc., 1962), p. 133.

him by the State. At the same time he witnessed the double standard in Spanish life: lip service was paid to God while charity and humility were practiced by only a few. Yet many of his readers could not discern that he was not attacking Catholic dogma as much as he was condemning religious fanaticism—"the customs and ideas cherished by secular fanaticism to the injury of the Church."¹⁶

In Gloria, Daniel Morton, the protagonist, speaking for Galdós, accuses Spain of gross hypocrisy:

. . . los judíos y aún los mahometanos, practican su doctrina con más ardor que los españoles. Yo he visto lo que pasa aquí en las grandes ciudades las cuales parece han de ser reguladoras de todo el sentir de la nación, y me ha causado sorpresa la irreligiosidad de la mayoría de las personas ilustradas. Toda la clase media, con raras excepciones, es indiferente. Se practica el culto, pero más bien como un hábito rutinario, por respeto al público, a las familias y a la tradición, que por verdadera fe. Las mujeres se entregan a devociones exageradas; pero los hombres huyen de la Iglesia todo lo posible, y la gran mayoría de ellos deja de practicar los preceptos más elementales del dogma católico. No negaré que muchos acuden a la misa, siempre que sea corta, se entiende, y no falten muchachas bonitas que ver a la salida; pero eso es fácil, amigo mío; no comprende usted que esto no basta para decir: ((Somos los hombres más religiosos de la tierra))?¹⁷

But Spain chose to misunderstand this great writer. It was easier to question his sincerity and to dub him an atheist than to examine consciences and practice faithfully the ideals rather than simply the precepts of the Roman Catholic Church.

The fine line between the truly religious and the religious fanatic is as tenuous as the line which separates the genuis from the lunatic. A work-

¹⁶William Dean Howells, Introduction, Doña Perfecta (New York: Harper Bros., 1895), p. vi.

¹⁷Benito Pérez Galdós, Gloria (Madrid: Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando, S. A., 1963), II, p. 143-4.

ing definition of the term fanatic is almost impossible unless it is contrasted with an acceptable definition of religion. This in itself poses a problem since "there are said to be no less than ten thousand definitions of religion."¹⁸

Nevertheless, out of those ten thousand rhetorical definitions of religion, one emerges which seems plausible:

Religion is the sum total of beliefs, sentiments, and practices, individual and social, which have for their object a power which man recognizes as supreme, on which he depends and with which he can enter (or has entered) into relation.¹⁹

The fanatic might then be considered as one who exaggerates any or all of the components which compose the sum total of religion. The fanatic will emphasize the uniqueness of his own beliefs until he becomes intolerant of all other practices and manifestations which do not correspond to his own. The next logical step in the fanatic's thinking will be the use of force, if necessary, to convert those deluded by other beliefs.

This is exactly what Galdós was trying to prevent in Spain: a nineteenth-century Inquisition or a Spanish Richelieu. He did not disclaim the exclusive place of Christianity or, better, Catholicism among the rest of the religions of the world. He understood that for the true Christian, "the word false is not to be used in reference to other faiths. That word is reserved for the sordid and insincere, for the unworthy and base among the adherents of any religion, Christianity included."²⁰

¹⁸John Morley, "Democracy and Reaction," Nineteenth Century, April 1905, p. 9.

¹⁹Louis de Grandmaison, The History of Religion, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1930-4), I, p. 3.

²⁰E. D. Soper, The Religion of Mankind (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1938), p. 22.

For Galdós, the historian and the man cognizant of the effects wrought by Judaism and Islam on his country's culture, it stood to reason that "the Christian cannot be intolerant."²¹ So it was that he wrote his famous trilogy: Doña Perfecta (1876), Gloria (1877), and La Familia de León Roch (1879). He wrote not to preach at Spain nor to indict her nor even to reprimand her—but rather to show her that change is a universal law of nature.

El anticlericalismo de Galdós se recrudeció con la derrota porque pensaba que la intransigencia del clero y la oposición de la iglesia española a la libertad de expresión y de pensamiento eran causas indirectas de aquella por mantener al país durante siglos, alejado de la evolución cultural, temerosos de que la civilización, el progreso y la ciencia pusieran en peligro la influencia que ejercían sobre las conciencias.²²

In the above-mentioned works he examines and reveals the agonies and problems of nineteenth-century Spain. In them, religion, in some form, plays a predominant role. I shall attempt in the following pages to analyze that role and through such an analysis reveal Galdós as a liberal progressive thinker, deeply concerned about the future of his beloved Spain—shackled by that religious myth she had so assiduously preserved.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ricardo Gullón, Introduction to Miau (San Juan: University of Puerto Rico, 1957), p. 37.

CHAPTER II
DOÑA PERFECTA

Doña Perfecta is the first book in Galdós' religious trilogy, and it paves the way for the progression of the more stultifying aspects of fanaticism as presented in the two later works, Gloria, and La Familia de León Roch. With the exception of the last book, the two titles are symbolically ironical of varying degrees of fanaticism. Doña Perfecta has enjoyed the widest popularity and is often cited as a typical example of Galdós' style. Such a high position, however, is often challenged by the critics who maintain that the work has withstood the test of time mainly because "Doña Perfecta es la protagonista encarnación de un iberismo tenebroso y duro bastante acorde con la imagen tradicional del fanatismo . . ." ¹

Aside from the universal passions of love, ambition, and vengeance presented in the book, the author interweaves several aspects related both directly and indirectly to religion:

The problem of fanaticism and hypocrisy, symbolized by a venerable matriarch in an imaginary town which is representative of all of Spain.

The town blindly obeys authority (Doña Perfecta, whose very name is the most obvious symbol). Authority, herein, connotes the traditionalism which cannot permit any progressive idea (Pepe Rey) to threaten it.

Ultimately authority reverts to an Old Testament-like violence—in contrast to the humility and meekness taught by Jesus as bases for Catholic doctrine—and violence supersedes charity, destroying both the innocent and the sinner.

¹Ricardo Gullón, Introduction to Miau (San Juan: University of Puerto Rico, 1957), p. 37.

Although Galdós makes essentially the same points in the other two novels, Doña Perfecta, considered solely on its technical merits, achieves more since Galdosian verbosity weakens both of the other books. His masterly characterization of Doña Perfecta's subtle change from the role of loving aunt to a dark angel elevates the novel to heights neither of the others achieves. The book is a "thesis novel which depicts the conflict between blind dogmatism, personified in Doña Perfecta, and enlightened belief, represented by Pepe Rey."² It is "una de las primeras novelas por Galdós, en que se ocupa del problema religioso como base de la discordia que divide a los españoles."³

Doña Perfecta as a character is unique in that she is the only major protagonist of this trilogy whose thoughts are never penetrated by the author. Therefore, all the conclusions drawn as to her hypocrisy and fanaticism are based solely on her exterior actions and conversations with other characters. Such treatment poses a very real problem: Was Doña Perfecta opposed to marriage between her nephew and daughter from the moment she received such a proposal from her brother; or, was it Pepe's conduct alone which triggered the latent fanatical tendencies in her behavior?

Inasmuch as all the inhabitants from Orbijosa were convinced that anyone who came from a city was automatically corrupt and an infidel, it would not seem implausible that Doña Perfecta, the matriarch of the town, would have judged the cosmopolitan Pepe Rey as contaminated. As the tension in the book mounts, she herself admits to Pepe that she only agreed to the marriage between him and

² Joseph Schraibman, Dreams in Galdós (New York: Hispanic Institute, 1960), p. 59.

³ Diego Marín, La civilización española (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 221.

Rosario so as not to offend Pepe's father. Ironically, it was Pepe's father who years earlier had saved Doña Perfecta from bankruptcy after her husband's ignominious death in a duel.

On the other hand, Pinzón leader of the militia sent to Orbijosa to quell any uprisings among the paisanos there, tells his old friend Pepe that he had always considered Doña Perfecta ". . . una persona excelente y la única de quien no he oído hablar mal a los ajeros. Cuando estuve aquí la otra vez, en todas partes oía ponderar su bondad, su caridad, sus virtudes."⁴

But Doña Perfecta, chief spokesman for "un pueblo dominado por gentes que enseñan la desconfianza, la superstición y el aborrecimiento a todo el género humano," (page 159) must certainly have judged Pepe by Orbijosa's standards, thus breaking the injunction "Judge not that ye be not judged." (Matthew, VII, 1)

In this matter of hypocrisy, the modern-day reader is faced with an ethical dilemma: do the means justify the end? Doña Perfecta convinces herself that everything she does is to assure the happiness of her only child, Rosario. Never once, however, does she ask her daughter if she loves Pepe. Such action will stand in stark contrast with Gloria's father who demands that his daughter search her own heart and then tell him her decision concerning the suitor he favors. Doña Perfecta gives her brother to understand that a marriage between the two cousins would be blessed by her wholeheartedly. At the same time she tells her daughter that Pepe is an atheist and demands that the girl rebuff him. She employs her authority as Rosario's mother to rationalize her use of mental force on her daughter. "Si Rosario no aborrece a ese perdido, como yo deseo, le aborrecerá. De algo sirve la autoridad de una madre." (page 220)

⁴Benito Pérez Galdós, Doña Perfecta (Madrid: Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando, S. A., 1964), p. 162. Subsequent references to this edition will be cited in text.

But what makes Doña Perfecta's machinations hypocritical is the fact that she does not even know what Pepe really believes. She has judged a priori that her nephew, not practicing the same precepts as those in Orbajosa, is, therefore, an atheist. Like most Aristoteliean logicians, Doña Perfecta assumes a false premise in her syllogistic thinking, thus arriving at a realistically false conclusion—which at the same time is syllogistically valid. For example:

- a. All people not from Orbajosa are atheists.
- b. Pepe Rey is not from Orbajosa.
- c. Therefore! Pepe Rey is an atheist.

With this conclusion in mind, Doña Perfecta feels the means justify their end. From the moment Pepe arrives, she artfully contrives ways of hindering him from carrying out the agreement between her and her brother:

She deliberately tries to provoke him into admitting that he is bored by the simple life led in Orbajosa. When such strategy fails, she gives him enough rope to hang himself by inviting Don Inocencio to the house. The ultimate outcome of their every encounter is a theological argument between the two men with Doña Perfecta championing the traditionalism of her confessor.

Still smiling, the loving aunt secretly encourages the paisanos to harass Pepe with a plethora of lawsuits in connection with the land inherited from his mother. With no compunction at all, she orders her friend at the post office to lose letters addressed to Pepe from his father. She writes an anonymous poison pen letter to officials in Madrid with the result that Pepe is relieved of his post as civil engineer for development of a bridge near Orbajosa. Via Don Inocencio, the bishop becomes convinced that Pepe (though the nephew of the saintly Perfecta) is an atheist. The good bishop then proceeds to have said atheist expelled from the cathedral. Finally, Doña Perfecta keeps Rosario

incomunicado telling Pepe that her daughter has become upset by his behavior and refuses to see him.

In the climactic scene in which Pepe accuses his aunt of such intrigues and hypocrisy, she imperiously refuses to deny that she has stooped to such stratagems. In the same breath, however, she does deny "la dañada intención" (page 168) which Pepe attributes to her actions. Ironically she then accuses him of judging her solely on circumstantial evidence and conjecture. Evidently blind to the fact that she herself is guilty of the same wrongdoing, she demands: "¿Tienes tu la suprema inteligencia que se necesita para juzgar de plano las acciones de los demás y dar sentencia sobre ellas? ¿Eres Dios para conocer las intenciones?" (page 169)

In her righteousness, Doña Perfecta fails to comprehend that she has set herself up as God and has judged both her nephew and her daughter. To her, the "medios indirectos para conseguir un fin bueno y honrado" (page 169) were perfectly legitimate in spite of the fact that Pepe suffered grave personal injury as a result of her supreme intelligence.

Because of her piety, her state of grace, Doña Perfecta informs her nephew that her conscience is untroubled since God knew the intention behind her subterfuge while Pepe in his ignorance was unable to realize that she had resorted to secrecy only in order to avoid a public scandal, offend her brother, and cause gossip among people by refusing to countenance the marriage.

Finally, she deigns to remind Pepe that "el que no cree en Dios no ve causas." (page 170) In her omniscience, however, she has not foreseen the ultimate effect of her causes—death for Pepe and insanity for Rosario.

Although Pepe is not convinced by his aunt's subtle and mystical dialectics, he assures her that he respects her intentions. With the heretic at bay, Doña Perfecta then proceeds graciously to admit that perhaps her tactics have been

unsuitable in spite of her obvious object. Such an admission on her part, however, is never followed by an explanation making clear WHY she felt she should not have stated plainly that she wanted no marriage between Pepe and Rosario. Now that it is too late for such straightforwardness, she nevertheless states adamantly: "Ya lo sabes. No quiero que te cases con Rosario." (page 171)

Pepe is not intimidated by her, and his announcement that he will marry Rosario regardless of his aunt's wishes is almost passive compared with Perfecta's explosive wrath. His audacity is incomprehensible to her. "¿Acaso no hay en el mundo más que ella y tú? ¿No hay padres, no hay sociedad, no hay conciencias, no hay Dios?" (page 173)

When Perfecta accuses him of respecting nothing, he retorts that truly he does not respect anything unworthy of respect. In other words Pepe cannot and will not respect his aunt simply because she is his father's sister—she must earn his respect. Her authority and stubborn will mean nothing to him. In a final attempt to impress Doña Perfecta that he will take Rosario by force if necessary, Pepe reiterates that though everyone considers her infallible, he does not. "Estoy muy lejos de creer que las sentencias de usted no tengan apelación ante Dios." (page 173)

Before Pepe leaves Doña Perfecta's house, they declare open war: he swearing to marry Rosario through whatever ways he can contrive and she vowing that all which is honorable—parents, society, and Church will unite to prevent any such union between an atheist and an innocent and pious Catholic.

In the final scene between the two, Pepe has what proves to be almost a vision of his own destiny: "Mi sangre caerá sobre la conciencia de usted; la de usted caerá sobre la mía" (page 176)

Ultimately Doña Perfecta wins; for Pepe never marries Rosario, and his is

the only blood shed. But the victory is Pyrrhic, and only Doña Perfecta remains inside the circle from which she so assiduously shut the God of Love.

Bigotry in Provincial Spain

Traditionalism and suspicion found natural breeding grounds in the small towns and villages in nineteenth-century Spain where the Pyrenees were more than a physical barrier. Several of Galdós' contemporaries⁵ wrote books extolling the pure life in the country. Cities were depicted as cesspools of decadence, and since all roads led to Madrid, that city was the epitome of all evils—social, political, and religious.

Galdós, however, held the view that the superstition and ignorance in the rural areas were actually more stultifying than those of the city slums. His picture of life in Orbañosa, Doña Perfecta's ancestral home, is so vivid that the town is as much a protagonist as its first lady. The religious note is struck from the beginning as Galdós describes Pepe's entrance into the town. The first aspect which impresses him as a stranger is the paralytic somberness affected by the shadow of the great cathedral which seems to engulf the town. The continuous chiming of the bells in the belfry is not able to drown out the monotonous drone of the street beggars whose hands are eternally extended. These beggars pack the streets and "ofrecían lastimoso espectáculo." (page 21)

Pepe is depressed by the teeming humanity which surrounds him and the cathedral "cuyo aspecto arquitectónico era más bien de ruina y muerte que de prosperidad y vida." (page 21) Later, he mentions his first impressions to his aunt and to her confessor, Don Inocencio. As an engineer, he expresses the

⁵Valera, Valdés, Pereda, authors of Pepita Jiménez, Marta y María, and Pedro Sánchez, respectively.

idea that the barren land surrounding Orbijosa could be converted to fertile fields with the help "de un par de cabezas inteligentes que dirigieran la renovaci3n de este pa3s y algunos miles de manos activas." (page 40) He then suggests that those of the beggars who are healthy be gainfully employed as laborers in such restoration.

Don Inocencio promptly retorts, "Para eso est1 la caridad . . ." (page 41)

Yet there is never a single incident which portrays Doña Perfecta in a charitable attitude or action toward the poor. She spends entire nights bent over the tedious details of costly clothes for the images in the cathedral and ignores the ragged beggars outside her own door.

The Bible says: "The poor always ye have with ye." (John XII, 8) And so it is with Doña Perfecta, the religious, the pious, the devout who has delegated herself to be the spiritual defender of Orbijosa. Forgotten is the admonition that "though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal . . . and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing . . ." (First Corinthians, XIII, 1-4)

Gald3s has emphasized his portrait of rustic arrogance through satire.

The name of the town is a corruption of the Latin urbs augusta; the only thing august about Orbijosa is its citizens' pomposity. Such a note is struck after Pepe's first encounter with Doña Perfecta's favorite henchman, Caballuco. Tío Licurgo, Pepe's guide, seems astonished that Pepe has not heard of Caballuco's bravery even in Madrid. The old man boasts that the governor himself always tips his hat to Caballuco, who because of political machinations in Madrid, has been relegated to the position of a mere postman in the outlying regions near Orbijosa—this infamy in spite of the fact that he springs from an old and noble family.

Don Cayetano, Doña Perfecta's erudite brother-in-law is so engrossed in Orbajosa, that he has spent his entire life preparing a book on noteworthy Orbajosans dating from antiquity to his own contemporaries. Unfortunately, his research is so thorough and his pride so verbose, that he never manages to get around to writing about his peers; since he devotes no less than five volumes to Orbajosans through the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, he feels confident that Linajes de Orbajosa will one day become required reading for the modern young Spaniard who is being led astray by the mundane.

Galdós' satire about the town and its inhabitants is most biting, however, when Don Inocencio, in an attempt to contradict Pepe's observation about the barren fields, boasts that " . . . aquí se producen los primeros ajos de toda España. Pasen de veinte las familias ricas que viven entre nosotros." (page 41)

Unfortunately, nature has not smiled favorably upon the garlic growers for several years, and Orbajosa's title as the garlic capital of the world is in doubt.

Throughout the book, inordinate pride coupled with a stern provinciality is the basis of religious intolerance. Pepe Rey, weary of cosmopolitan sophistication, has travelled to Orbajosa in search of simple nobility, rustic peace, and patriarchal customs. His romantic idealization of country life envisioned all goodness, honor, and frankness. And so he journeyed forth—never to return from that paradise which was to become his own personal hell.

Don Inocencio, False Prophet

Galdós was not only concerned with religious fanaticism, but also with the inherent evils of clericalism. His portrait of Don Inocencio, Doña Perfecta's confessor, reflects this viewpoint. The irony of the priest's name becomes obvious from the beginning, for this priest is shrewd—almost to the point of

chicanery. His power over Doña Perfecta is subtle and is veiled in innuendoes rather than candor. A Latinist, he symbolizes the conservative element of the Church—that group which clings to antiquity and the traditional. The trap Don Inocencio lays for Pepe is like a labyrinth: so complex that no matter where Pepe turns he cannot see the light. Only after he has ensnared himself does he recognize the priest as his enemy. By then it is too late, for Don Inocencio has slyly planted the seeds of suspicion in Doña Perfecta's mind—seeds nurtured on hate, ambition, and blood.

Outwardly, Don Inocencio seems humble in the face of Pepe's scientific knowledge. But the sarcasm in his praise is missed only by the naive Rosario. On his first day in Orbajosa, Pepe commits the grave faux pas of expressing his disillusionment in the town where his mother was born. Don Inocencio uses the young engineer's brilliance as a disguise for his vituperation. He concludes his artful harangue, " . . . está usted autorizado para todo, incluso para decirnos que somos poco menos que cafres." (page 42)

Taken by surprise, Pepe does not understand "esta filípica, terminada con marcado tono de ironía y harto impertinente toda ella." (page 42)

Doña Perfecta and Rosario seem oblivious to the undercurrents in the conversation. After lunch, the priest leaves Pepe to talk with his aunt and cousin. Feeding the parrot, Don Inocencio remarks, "De charlatanes está lleno el mundo de los hombres y el de los pájaros." (page 43)

Galdós' technique in the characterization of Don Inocencio is so complex that the reader is never sure of the reasons behind the older man's behavior. Certainly his sarcasm with Pepe seems unwarranted since he does not even know the younger man. Nevertheless, in accordance with the attitude of the other townspeople, his action reflects their basic distrust of a stranger. Both Tío Licurgo and Caballuco react similarly toward Pepe, but only Don Inocencio

is shrewd enough to realize that Pepe, pushed far enough, may disgrace himself in his aunt's eyes.

As the book nears the climax, however, the reader learns that Don Inocencio, badgered by his niece, María Remedios, has hoped for a match between his own nephew Jacinto, and Doña Perfecta's daughter. His plans are squelched upon the arrival of the letter from Pepe's father proposing the same arrangement between the two cousins. Therefore, it would seem logical that the priest is acting not only in accordance with local customs but is actually flaunting such behavior for his personal and selfish gain—for with Pepe out of the way, Don Inocencio will be able to use his persuasive powers to sway Doña Perfecta into consenting to a marriage between Jacinto and Rosario. But, "vaulting ambition o'er leaps itself," and Don Inocencio does not realize his dream for his nephew. Nonetheless, he does betray his role as a priest by twisting and prejudicing Doña Perfecta's conscience to obtain a result beneficial to himself.

A favorite technique of Galdós is his use of dreams to intensify a point already made through straight narrative. Such a technique is employed to underline the degeneration of Don Inocencio in Rosario's mind. In her dream, she looks through a window and sees a group composed of her mother, Don Inocencio, Caballuco, and various friends of Doña Perfecta. This is the scene in which Doña Perfecta tries, through sly insinuations and jokes aimed at Caballuco's virility, to goad the latter into physical action against Pepe. In her delirium, Rosario imagines her mother and Don Inocencio as birds, Caballuco as a dragon, and the rest as clay dolls. The symbols reflect "la deformación moral de las almas de Doña Perfecta y Don Inocencio y lo monstruoso de su acción."⁶

Don Inocencio's degeneration hits nadir when María Remedios finally extracts

⁶Vicente Gaós, "Notas sobre la técnica de Galdós," Insula, No. 82, (October 1952), p. 5.

from her uncle his promise to send Caballuco with her on a clandestine errand. María has repeatedly tried to convince both Doña Perfecta and her uncle that the only method which will be effective against Pepe is force. But neither of them can bring themselves to initiate such action; instead they try to trick Caballuco into provoking a fight with Pepe. Caballuco, however, misinterprets their sarcasm to mean that they will countenance no physical action against the interloper. Up to the final moment, even as he charges Caballuco with protecting María Remedios from insults, Don Inocencio protests, "Jamás aconsejé medios violentos ni sanguinarios, ni atrocidades de mal género, sino sutiles trazas que no contenían pecado." (page 237)

Like Pontius Pilate, Don Inocencio then "dirigió a su sobrina una mirada penetrante y acompañándolas de la acción correspondiente, profirió estas palabras: ((Yo me lavo las manos.))" (page 250)

But Don Inocencio's hands are like those of Lady Macbeth's—hands which all the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten. After Pepe's death, he retires to a convent in Rome to spend the rest of his life in penance. But first he strips himself of the worldly temptations that have caused him to betray not only himself and Doña Perfecta's trust, but his God as well. He argues with María Remedios and she leaves his house never to return. Shortly thereafter he resigns his chair as Latinist and begins preparing himself for his retirement. Don Cayetano Polentinos, Doña Perfecta's brother-in-law laments, "¡Ay! Orbajosa pierde mucho perdiendo a su gran latino. Me parece que pasarán años tras años y no tendremos otro. Nuestra gloriosa España se acaba, se aniquila, se muere." (page 277)

Galdós, of course, would not agree with this chauvinistic viewpoint. The novel's dim ray of hope lies in Don Inocencio's recognition of his wrongdoing and his attempt to expiate that sin. He resolutely refuses to see Doña Perfecta—

to absolve her of their mutual crime. His move to Rome is symbolic of faith in authority—uncorrupted by worldly ambition.

Doña Perfecta does not, unfortunately, follow her mentor's lead. She clings to her old customs and becomes even more strict in her outward religious practices. Her money is spent on novenas and splendid religious ceremonies— not a far cry from the costly garments she had previously made for the images. Outside the church the poor wait, and Pepe Rey lies prematurely in his grave. Doña Perfecta's destiny is symbolized by a black cloud which she sees turning blacker while she daily becomes more and more yellow. She has not yet learned that she has been listening to a false prophet.

The Death of a Liberal

At thirty-four Pepe Rey has grown tired of the cosmopolitan life he has led and finds himself longing for a life where "todo es bondad y honradez . . ." (page 29) His father becomes grandiloquent in his idealization of rustic life where " . . . no se conocen la mentira y la farsa, como en nuestras grandes ciudades; allí renacen las santas inclinaciones que el bullicio de la moderna vida ahoga . . ." (page 29) With his father's words ringing in his ears, Pepe departs for Orbajosa. Such romantic visions have not prepared him for what he finds there, and in his disenchantment he ostracizes himself from life in Orbajosa.

Pepe is the archetype of the Galdosian hero: he is young, healthy, and intelligent. He is also symbolic of enlightened beliefs and progress. In his heart, he is more Christian than the fanatic element around him; for he practices charity, and he forgives his enemies. He is not, nor does he pretend to be, perfect. "No admitía falsedades, ni mistificaciones, ni esos retruecanos del pensamiento con que se divierten algunas inteligencias impregnadas de gongorismo . . ." (page 31)

Although Pepe early becomes disgusted by the ironic language used by Don Inocencio, he manages to make his true feelings until the priest oversteps himself and dogmatically condemns science: " . . . la muerte del sentimiento y de los dulces ilusiones. Con ella [la ciencia] la vida del espíritu se amengua." (page 48)

When Don Inocencio challenges Pepe to refute that science will turn the human race into robots after destroying the arts and religion, the young mathematician decides to subject the priest to the most radical ideas he can express. He has not yet fully realized that Don Inocencio is his enemy and that when he accepts the challenge, the victory will be Pyrrhic. But his answer symbolizes Galdós' hope for the future of Spain:

. . . la ciencia esté derribando a martillazos un día y otro tanto ídolo vano, la superstición, el sofisma, las mil mentiras de lo pasado, bellas las unas, ridículas las otras, pues de todo hay en la viña del Señor El misticismo en religión, la rutina en la ciencia, el amaneramiento en las artes, caen como cayeron los dioses paganos, entre burlas El sentimentalismo vano, el misticismo, la fiebre, la alucinación, el delirio desaparecen, y el que antes era enfermo, hoy esta sano y se goza con placer indecible en la justa apreciación de las cosas. La fantasía, la terrible loca, que era el alma de casa, pasa a ser criada Ya no hay falsos computos de la edad del mundo, porque la paleontología y la prehistoria han contado los dientes de esta calavera en que vivimos y averiguado de su verdadera edad. La fábula, llamase paganismo o idealismo cristiano, ya no existe, y la imaginación está de cuerpo presente. Todos los milagros posibles se reducen a los que yo hago cuando se me antoja en mi gabinete con una pila de Bunsen. Ya no hay mas multiplicaciones de panes y peces que las que hace la industria con sus moldes y maquinas y las de la imprenta, que imita a la Naturaleza, sacando de un sólo tipo millones de ejemplares. En suma . . . se han corrido los ordenes para dejar cesantes a todos los absurdos, falsedades, ilusiones, ensueños, sensiblerías, y preocupaciones que ofuscan el entendimiento del hombre. (pages 49-51)

There are at least eight specific points concerning religion mentioned in Pepe's rebuttal and tradition, authority, and miracles are especially attacked. Doña Perfecta is left shaken by the outburst while Don Inocencio smiles in sardonic triumph. However, Pepe whispers to Rosario, "No me hagas caso, primita. Digo estos disparates para sulfurar al señor Canonigo." (page 51)

But when Pepe declares to his aunt and the priest that he has been joking, Doña Perfecta will not believe him; and Don Inocencio remarks slyly that he has always found himself amazed " . . . al ver el asombroso ingenio que Dios ha dado a los ateos y a los protestantes." (page 53)

Pepe has been judged and sentenced. Doña Perfecta warns him that if he really wants to be saved he must follow Don Inocencio's example in all things. Later, Pepe inadvertently adds insult to injury by declaring that lawyers are the plague of Spain. He admits that this is a generalization since there are certainly some good lawyers—his own father, for example. Don Inocencio's nephew, Jacinto, has just graduated with highest honors in law; and Doña Perfecta takes Pepe's remark as a personal affront to Jacinto, who, in her eyes, has remained untainted by his contact with the outside world. In Rosario's words, Jacinto "es un muchacho muy formalito. Mamá también le quiere mucho." (page 59) The real reason, of course, for Doña Perfecta's fondness for Jacinto is that he never goes to the Casino; he doesn't chase women; he doesn't drink to excess, and after a hard day's work, he goes home to his uncle's house and retires early. He is, in short, a "dyed-in-the-wool" Orbajosan. The poverty and barrenness of the city do not affect him, and he docilely accepts the religion of his uncle while he pedantically spouts traditional dogma to refute the progressive ideas of liberals like Pepe.

From Pepe's first day in his aunt's house, he is put on the defensive. Before he has even had a chance to wash his hands, she states that she is sure he will soon be bored by the simple life in the country. By the end of the day, she decides he is unaffectionate because he has failed to pat the parrot. She takes it upon herself to scold Pepe at the table and compares him with Jacinto, who had " . . . la abnegación de pasar su juventud . . . en un pueblo donde no hay Teatro Real, ni bufos, ni bailarines, ni filósofos, ni ateneos, ni papeluchos, ni congresos, ni otras diversiones y pasatiempos." (page 71)

Omniscience seems an offshoot of perfection. Pepe's aunt presumes to understand Darwin by protesting that she cannot believe " . . . que descendemos de los micos . . ." (page 74) Never once has Doña Perfecta asked Pepe for a synopsis of his beliefs, but in her perfection she automatically knows that he denies " . . . la existencia del alma . . . que está una droga como los pepelillos de magnesia o de ruibarbo que se venden en la botica" (page 74) She righteously warns Pepe not to mock publicly the beliefs of the good and pious Orbajosans.

For all his intelligence and astuteness, Pepe is very slow about discovering the instigator of the plots which cause him to lose his appointment as civil engineer, which goad various paisanos into suing him in court, which delay his father's letters, which lead the bishop to refuse him entrance into the cathedral and, finally, which rob him of his life. He consistently underestimates, first, the hypocrisy of Doña Perfecta, and second, her deep-rooted fanaticism. It is this bigotry that makes her forget that Pepe's father once saved her from public scandal and starvation. Although the same blood runs in both their veins, Pepe is a stranger, an alien, and ultimately, an enemy. In the end, however, it is Pepe who is the hero of the book. By his death he becomes a martyr, and if outwardly Doña Perfecta does not suffer because of his death, inwardly she must; for as previously stated, day by day she becomes more and more yellow as a black cloud covers her horizon.

For Whom the Bell Tolls

No man is an Island; entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were, any man's death dimin-

ishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whome the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.⁷

Just as all the characters' lives are changed in one way or another by Pepe's tragic death, so Rosario also is diminished. Described early in the book as delicate, she is afflicted by an hereditary nervous ailment. Her uncle does not know that she has been suffering from guilt because she loves Pepe in spite of her mother's protests. Nor does he know that her breakdown becomes an escape from reality—the inevitable choice between Pepe (progress) and Doña Perfecta (security and conservatism). Technically speaking Rosario, of course, is the indirect cause of Pepe's death since it is her dramatic confession to her mother about their midnight rendezvous that whips Doña Perfecta's hatred into physical violence. Without a second's hesitation, she commands Caballuco, her henchman, to kill Pepe. Granted that few people could have withstood Doña Perfecta's brainwashing, Rosario must still be held accountable for Pepe's death. She knows that she can have either her mother and Jacinto, or marry Pepe and leave Orbijosa. But she can never have them both, although she has attempted this by meeting Pepe secretly and dreaming of a time when, through her, Pepe and her mother will be reconciled. Her clandestine meetings trigger her guilt since she is acting contrary to all the social mores of Orbijosa, the authority of her mother, and her own religion. From her mother's point of view, Pepe is a heretic; he can only contaminate her unless she ceases to associate with him. And so locked away in her room, day after day, Rosario's mind feeds on her imagination until she hysterically confesses her plan to elope with Pepe. With these words, she seals his doom and her own as well, for Don Cayetano writes to

⁷ John Donne, "Devotions, XVII." Devotions upon Emergent Occasions (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), p. 107.

his friend that her case is hopeless—she is destined to live in her mad world of fantasy, cut off from reality by Pepe's death.

Don Cayetano has already been mentioned several times in passing. His is the role of the dilettante; his only real interest in life is Orbajosa but unlike Doña Perfecta, he is not a religious fanatic. In his boredom, he accepts his sister-in-law's tale that Pepe committed suicide. As the book ends, however, there are indications that he has learned or is on the verge of learning the truth. Pepe's death does not affect him as much as does Don Inocencio's withdrawal from Orbajosa, since in his mind, the latter personified all that was good in Orbajosa.

Jacinto and his mother, María Remedios, are also affected by Pepe's death. Although neither plays a primary role in the book, María technically becomes an instrument in Pepe's death. It is she who sees him enter the garden to await Rosario; it is she who sounds the alarm to Doña Perfecta; and it is she who has brought Caballuco knowing that he will obey any command Doña Perfecta should give. Caballuco rises to the supreme test—he deliberately takes the life of another man. María's dreams of social advancement through the marriage of Jacinto and Rosario are shattered, and ultimately she is forced to leave her uncle's home. But her god is her son, and she goes with him to Madrid, where she envisions him one day as a minister of state. Her eyes are on the future—not the dead past.

Four other Orbajosans feel Pepe's death: Don Juan Tafetán and the three sisters, Las Troyas. Besides Don Cayetano, they are the only people who attend Pepe's funeral. The former is a rather frustrated Don Juan. He and Pepe become friends in the casino. He also introduces Pepe to the Troya sisters, irritants to the conscience of Orbajosa. They recognize the faults and good points of everyone in town. Poor and socially ostracized from the elite, they nevertheless maintain a sharp sense of humor which impresses Pepe so much that on one

occasion he gives them money for food and shoes. Later, his aunt chides him, warning that his position in society is too high to associate with people of such dubious reputations. Ironically, the three sisters who nickname everyone in town, tell Pepe that for Doña Perfecta alone, no nickname is necessary since she is all her name connotes.

The bishop of Orbajosa ensures against any contamination by the dead heretic when he refuses to allow Pepe to be buried in consecrated ground. Doña Perfecta does nothing to change that venerable gentleman's mind, even though she is the one most affected by Pepe's murder: she loses her daughter; she estranges herself from Pepe's father; she alienates her confessor; and finally she becomes paradoxically, an island—alone and lonely, lost in her sea of inhumanity listening to the bell toll louder and louder.

CHAPTER III

GLORIA

Some readers are depressed by the seemingly black note on which Doña Perfecta ends; and if hope, symbolized by Pepe's martyrdom is too nebulous, Gloria, in contrast, ends with a blinding ray of joy symbolized by the birth of a child born into two worlds of intolerance: the Catholic and the Jewish. The Catholic sphere represents religious fanaticism while the Jewish sphere represents racial bigotry. Once more Galdós attacks the abuses of authority by the Church, society, and the parents or heads of families. Another aspect of the book, not treated in Doña Perfecta, is the hypocrisy of fair-weather friends.

Catholicism has many strong attractions for women,¹ and in nineteenth-century Spain, religion was one of the few interests outside the home that women might pursue. Both politics and the professions were closed to them. In all three of the thesis novels there are allusions to the heroines' sketchy education. Gloria, alone, has read most of the Spanish classics; and her outspoken opinions are often a source of amusement to her father and his friends. But like most nineteenth-century ladies, Gloria's first concern is with religion. "For those who know Old Spain realize that woman had so little to do to pass her time that religion became a compensation for what is today called an 'inferiority complex,' and fanaticism developed rapidly in such fertile soil."²

¹Namely the Marian cult: the Immaculate Conception and Virgin Birth.

²W. K. Jones, Preface to Marta y María (Boston: Heath & Co., 1929), p. xv.

Therefore, it does not seem strange that in each book dealing with religious fanatics, the main role is assigned to a woman. In two instances, the books bear the name of these protagonists; and in the third case, La Familia de León Roch, León's wife is the bigot. At the same time, it must be noted that Daniel Morton is Gloria's male counterpart; both he and she have been influenced early in life by characters with the duality of a Doña Perfecta personality.

The first volume of Gloria begins with the protagonist and her father, Don Juan, awaiting the arrival of the latter's brother, Bishop Angel Lantigua. Don Angel is accompanied by a young aspiring politician, Don Rafael, who asks Gloria's father's permission to marry the heroine. Before Gloria can give her father an answer, there is a violent storm which sends a ship upon the rocks. One of the victims, Daniel Morton, is brought to Gloria's house to recover. In the ensuing weeks, she and her family are convinced he is a Protestant, since his home is in England. Don Angel begins the arduous task of converting the stranger. Inevitably Daniel and Gloria fall in love, but he leaves her house without formally asking for her hand and without being converted. Sometime later, on a return trip to Ficóbriga, he encounters Gloria alone, and seduces her. He confesses he is not a Protestant but a Jew, and the first volume ends with Don Juan's melodramatic death caused by an apoleptic seizure brought on by Gloria's disgrace.

Volume two begins almost a year later; Gloria has had a son, from whom she is separated on orders from her uncle, Don Angel. She lives with her father's widowed sister and younger brother, Don Buenaventura, who is in favor of a speedy marriage between his niece and Daniel Morton, who had returned to England after Don Juan's death. Doña Serafinita and Don Angel, however, are opposed to any marriage, and the aunt tries to persuade Gloria to enter a convent with her.

Ultimately, Don Buenaventura reconciles Gloria with Daniel when the latter feigns conversion to Catholicism. Before the marriage can be performed, Daniel's mother comes from England to prevent the ceremony by swearing that her son is a thief. Although Daniel can prove his innocence, Gloria senses his hypocrisy and vows she will not marry him because she wants to retreat to a convent. Daniel then decides to take his son back to England with him, but Gloria, delirious and ill, extracts his promise to leave the child in Spain to be raised a Catholic. She dies, confident Daniel will truly turn to Catholicism so that they may meet in Heaven. He, however, returns to England, where he loses his mind in his search for a universal religion. He dies a few years later, but his son, Jesús, lives in Spain with the tolerant Don Buenaventura.

As the book opens, Gloria is portrayed as a beautiful and loving girl of eighteen. She has the innocence of Rosario plus a keen mind. Her father, though generally not in agreement with her ideas, never curbs her inquisitiveness. He stands in contrast with Doña Perfecta's rigidity. Nevertheless, he does believe religion should be the governing force in one's life. Gloria is a good Catholic, but as a result of some of her reading, she does find herself confused and in doubt about certain dogmas of the Church. There is a great deal of the mystic in her nature, and she is often besieged by superstition. She can conceive of no greater destiny than to bring Daniel into the flock.

As in Doña Perfecta, Galdós once more uses the dream technique to evoke a gothic, superstitious effect. Don Juan asks Gloria to consider Rafael's proposal of marriage; and although he is in favor of the match, he will say nothing in order not to influence her decision. She knows of no reason why she should not say yes, but hesitates because of a recurring dream that one day a handsome stranger will come to love her forever. By accidentally overhearing a conversation between Rafael and the local curate, Don Silvestre, she learns that her suitor is a free

thinker and believes in neither heaven or hell. Upon hearing this blasphemous confession, Gloria immediately thanks God for having given her concrete evidence to enforce her dream. The author's irony is evident—superstitious people always give the credit to the Lord.

Scarcely an hour before the shipwreck which will bring to Gloria her tall stranger, she meets the sacristan in the church where she has gone to pray. He tells her he feels very sad, for he has had a dream that she falls in love and forgets all about him and his children. He continues giving her a description of the man, ironically, " . . . tan hermoso que no hay otro semblante que pueda comparársele sino él de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo"³

When Gloria finally sees Daniel Morton, he is the ghost of the sacristan's dream. The two dreams together convince Gloria of a destiny stronger than family fears relating to Daniel's heretical religion. By the dreams, the superstitions, and her own desires, she convinces herself that it is God's will that she and Daniel love each other.

Love and Religion

After several weeks in the Lantigua household, Daniel supposedly leaves for England. As he leaves, he tells Gloria privately that he loves her, but he does not approach her father who has begun to suspect that his daughter has fallen in love with the young heretic. Had Daniel responded to Don Angel's conversion attempts, Don Juan would have had no objections to a marriage between the two. But marriage (a sacrament for the Catholic)⁴ to a Protestant was unthinkable.

Benito Pérez Galdós, Gloria (Madrid: Librería y Casa Editorial Hernando, S. A., 1963), I, p. 84. Subsequent references to this edition will be cited in text.

⁴ There are seven Sacraments in Roman Catholicism: Baptism, Confirmation, Absolution, Marriage, Holy Orders, Eucharist, and Extreme Unction.

Although Daniel does leave the Lantigua house, he does not leave Spain but contrives to meet Gloria secretly. Both feel guilty of moral and social transgressions because of such covert action. When Gloria exclaims, " . . . seremos expulsados de aquí como lo fuimos de mi casa, y no habrá playa ni bosque que nos amparen," (page 175, I) she is unknowingly recounting the history of the wandering Jew--forced to search throughout eternity for a place of refuge.

Each secret meeting becomes more and more intense until Gloria and Daniel reach the breaking point. Their conversation as usual turns to religion which " . . . es hermosa cuando une; horrible y cruel cuando separa." (page 176, I)

It is Gloria who recognizes that it is necessary to make a sacrifice if they want to consummate their love. But it is Daniel who recognizes that the sacrifice, to be meaningful, must be made by both of them. He warns her that society will not be placated if they are married in a civil ceremony. Gloria infers that he means there is no solution for them. She then accuses him of not loving her, for he is unwilling to make the supreme sacrifice--become a Catholic.

He protests that simply because he is a man, she cannot morally expect him to give up his beliefs--beliefs that she willfully knows nothing about and therefore cannot understand. He concludes, "En este asunto, la sentencia debe caer sobre el que tenga creencias menos firmes. ¿Cuáles son las tuyas?" (page 179, I)

She mechanically recites the Apostles' Creed and challenges him to be as explicit in verbalizing his own credo. He then reminds her that her faith is lukewarm about many dogmas of the Church, but she adamantly declares that her faith is unshakeable about the principal tenets. Daniel says this is not enough, that to be truly religious, one must believe absolutely and without reservation all that one's religion teaches. He claims his beliefs are this strong but that his love for Gloria is stronger and that if she is willing, they will attempt a compromise. Gloria is still under the impression that Daniel is a Protestant, and will agree to

no compromise. They say good bye and Daniel finally returns to England. In a mystic trance, Gloria has earlier admitted to herself her reasons for loving Daniel: he is kind, gentle, charitable, and intelligent; and most of all she is sure of his love for her. Though she recognizes their different religion as a social barrier, she believes, "Los que se aman son de una misma religión. Los que se aman no pueden tener religión distinta, y si la tienen, su amor les bautiza en un mismo Jordán." (page 167, I)

When the moment arrives for her to practice this philosophy, however, she cannot; and she chooses instead to be separated from Daniel. Several months later, he returns to Spain. Her father has gone to the local curate's hacienda with Don Angel for lunch. While there, a storm comes up and washes the bridge out, making it impossible to return to town. Daniel, meanwhile, has gone to Gloria's house, and learning that her father will spend the night in the country, he forces his way in, slips past the servants, and seduces Gloria in her room.

In the climactic scene which follows, Gloria reiterates her plan to reconcile their beliefs and consciences. Together they have sinned; together they will do penance.

Daniel admits that before God the differences between them are minute—but in the eyes of society, the barriers are insuperable. When Gloria proposes they genuflect before the image of Christ, vowing to reconcile their beliefs, to make all necessary sacrifices, and to love each other in sickness and in health, Daniel breaks down. He flinches before the image and confesses he is not a Christian, despite the impression he has fostered; he is a Jew.

Gloria's immediate reaction is withdrawal and rejection and lastly, incredulity. She will not believe that he has ". . . fe en esa doctrina." (page 242, I) If he were a Jew, it would have been impossible for her to have loved him since the mere name of his religion is a blasphemy. Her intolerance becomes rabid when

she demands, "¿Por qué no escribiste en la frente tu creencia infame? Por qué cuando me viste correr hacia ti, no me dijiste: 'Apártate, que estoy maldito de Dios y de los hombres'?" (page 233, I)

Daniel cannot understand the change in her. He grants that she has a right to be angry with him for never having declared his religion, but her slandering of his race is unworthy of her. Gloria then becomes the spokesman for all of Spain—she mouths as truths the age-old myths and superstitions about Jews. If he is a Jew, why isn't he as offensive as his religion? Why aren't his actions and speech as alien as his beliefs? Impossible that he be a Jew; he looks and acts like any other decent human being.

And like most humans, he feels as well. He laments, "Las palabras gobiernan al mundo, no las ideas. Dime: ¿Cuándo me amaste, por qué me amaste?" (page 243, I)

She enumerates her reasons, completely oblivious to their incongruity: She thought God had meant them for each other—that Daniel was sent especially for her. She loved him for his language, his actions, and for himself. She loved him because of a mystical tie she sensed between them.

In short, Gloria loved Daniel when he was what she thought he was; she cannot conceive that he is unchanged because he is stereotyped by a word—the Jew. She does not recognize that it is she who has changed. In a second she has become a bigot: "Dentro de Jesús lo admito todo; fuera de Él, nada." (page 244, I)

When Daniel accuses her of loving him without even having known him, she admits that it is paradoxical that he can be a Jew and still be worthy of love. She concludes that this must be because his soul is ready for salvation, that at heart he is really a Christian.

Daniel, however, feels as strongly about his beliefs as Gloria. He feels that his religion has been a link with his ancestors, of whom not one ever became

an apostate—even during their expulsion from Córdoba. He is convinced that their steadfast faith was as pleasing to God as was the zeal of the Grand Inquisitor. He doubts that the Christian hell will be populated only by Jews.

The mention of hell makes Gloria prophesy that although she has always resisted the idea, she is now convinced that if there is really no such place, God will create one—especially for her and Daniel. Eternity in hell can be avoided, however, if she can convert Daniel. Gloria seems impervious to the fact that her disbelief in hell verges on heresy; the belief in heaven, hell, and purgatory are tantamount to being a good Catholic. It was for this and similar questionings by her that Daniel had challenged her steadfastness in her beliefs as compared with his own. Yet knowing nothing of Judaism, Gloria cruelly mocks and vituperates that religion.

A comparison between Judaism and Christianity then ensues; for every point that Gloria uses in favor of Catholicism, Daniel produces its Jewish counterpart. The chasm they cannot bridge, however, is their dissenting views on Jesus' divinity. Gloria considers Daniel as personally responsible for the crucifixion, as was Pontius Pilate. The fact that their religions share so much is ignored by her. She also ignores Daniel's statement that in spite of Gloria's religion, he can still love and venerate her.

In desperation Daniel proposes a pact: Gloria will follow him to England, where they will both attempt to ". . . convertir al otro a su religión. Si tú vences, seré cristiano; si yo venzo, serás hebrea." (page 250, I)

The idea repels Gloria, but before they can discuss other alternatives, her father bursts into the room. With his hand upraised to strike his daughter, Don Juan suffers an apoplectic seizure. He dies a few hours later.

Don Angel, who has also learned of Daniel's true religion, carries out his brother's last wishes: he banishes the "god-killer" from the Lantigua house.

Racial Fanaticism Versus Religious Rigotry

Daniel's latent fanaticism does not become apparent until the second volume, which takes place almost a year after Don Juan's death. Daniel, at the request of Gloria's uncle, Don Buenaventura, returns to Ficóbriga. He returns with the hope of reaching a reconciliation with Gloria so that they may be married. He has not been told that Gloria has given birth to a son, Jesús. Ironically, his arrival coincides with the Palm Sunday procession. Not having been forewarned that the city will be marching en masse, Daniel and his servant disrupt the worshippers. They are thrown into jail, but Daniel is soon released on Don Buenaventura's recommendation. His servant, however, spends the night in jail while Daniel wanders throughout the town looking for a place to sleep. No one will admit him, and at last, exhausted, he searches for a hole to crawl into until morning. He encounters an old beggar carrying a young child in his arms. Touched by the mendicant's plight, Daniel gives him money to buy food for himself and his granddaughter. But with true Christian fortitude, the old man, deducing that Daniel is the "Jew," refuses the gold. "Tome usted sus dolones, que ningún cristiano recibe el dinero porque fué vendido el Señor." (page 79, II)

Pride has fed many Spaniards, but Galdós questions the grandfather's right to rob the small child of food for her empty stomach. Daniel then refuses the bread offered him by the old man. "¡Ay!—repuso Morton—, no es pan lo que quiero; otro menos cruel que tú me lo ha dado antes. Pan damos hasta a los perros. Dame tu compañía, tu fraternidad; tu conversación, tu tolerancia, el consuelo de la voz de otro hombre, algo que no sea discordias de religión, ni acusaciones por un hecho de que no soy responsable" (page 80, II)

But the uncomprehending beggar leaves Daniel alone, and for the first time he vows: "—Ah impio Nazareno . . . , nunca seré tuyo! ¡Nunca!" (page 80, II)

Daniel is at last given shelter by Caifás, the sacristan who had been befriended by the Jew earlier in the book. And like everyone else in the town, once Daniel's religion has been revealed, Caifás no longer looks upon his benefactor with the same eyes. In fact he promises to work night and day to repay the money Daniel has given him. Caifás, too, is unable to comprehend that the Jew does not want his money returned; he wants the warmth of the sacristan's friendship.

The next day Daniel and Don Buenaventura have their first meeting. Gloria's uncle is impressed with Daniel's social conscience, and he tries to convince the younger man that a compromise is possible if they will both be reasonable. This meeting brings out some interesting contrasts between Don Buenaventura's religious attitudes and those of his older brothers, Don Juan and Don Angel. These will be discussed later.

Another attitude also emerges from this meeting, Daniel's fanaticism for Judaism. To him, the Jews have fused religious and social laws to stabilize their nationality.

. . . Para el cristiano, la religión no es más que la religión; para nosotros, además de la religión es la raza, es una especie de suelo moral en que vivimos, es la lengua, es también el honor, ese honor de que usted me habla y que en nosotros no se concibe sin la consecuencia; sin la constancia en amar una fe augusta y venerable, por cual escarnecidos. (page 99, II)

He argues that the Jew is so deeply influenced by historical and social factors in his daily life that he could not consider abjuring his religion without first taking these into account. He does not hate Christianity because it is false or bad, but because it is cruel and useless. His is an instinctive love for the God of his forefathers. He then explains why apostasy is impossible for himself and all Jews: The Jew cannot forget the centuries of vituperation and forced social ostracism inflicted upon him by Christians. The contemporary Jew refuses to accept

punishment for Jesus' death. The apostate automatically severs himself from his family, his friends, and his race. He is condemned to living hell on this earth so far as any other Jew is concerned.

" . . . Y siento la pasión de mi nacionalidad perdida, de mí culto sencillo y grandioso, de mí pueblo desgraciado y escarnecido que conserva en sí un fondo admirable de valor moral" (page 101, II)

Don Buenaventura, however, doubts Daniel's convictions because of his love for Gloria, a Gentile. The latter admits that for him, Gloria was a test by God to measure his steadfastness. He failed the test because he succumbed to his love for Gloria; he placed her above his god. This was the crux of his dilemma: should social obligations come before religious duties?

The meeting between the two men ends in a stalemate. Daniel does not demand that Gloria become a Jew, but he cannot, himself, adore ". . . al filósofo crucificado, en cuyo nombre hemos decidido que eres una bestia." (page 102, II) But Don Buenaventura has held back his ace; Daniel still does not know that he has a son, separated from Gloria on Don Angel's orders.

Before Gloria's uncle can reveal his secret, however, Daniel learns through a series of strange coincidences of the existence of his child. From that moment on, there is a deepening of his mysticism. In the climactic scene on the beach, alone, at midnight, Daniel hits upon the idea of feigning his conversion in order to save Gloria from a convent or even death which seems inevitable if she is restrained from seeing her son--and in order to save the son he adores. Daniel talks to his god explaining, rationalizing, ". . . mi deber es salvarla. Me lo ordena la justicia que es Dios; la compasión que es Dios; la verdad que es Dios. Me ordena también la sociedad y esta ley de reciproco respeto Sí . . . ; es preciso, es fatal, inevitable; y así no lo hiciera, no habría nombre bastante vil en ninguna lengua para vituperarme." (page 169, II)

For the first time, Daniel comes face to face with his religious creed: His is the one and only God, the great, the terrible, the loving God who extends himself over all souls and governs them with a smile of infinite goodness. This God will understand his pretended conversion; this God will not condemn him for such hypocrisy; this God will not turn his face away in disgust. And Daniel returns to his room with an easy conscience because his decision will hurt no one—his parents, his wife-to-be, or his son.

Both Daniel and Gloria are liberals until the moment they are faced with putting into practice their ideas. Their behavior is consistent with their environment, for each has been influenced by two women who symbolize the duality of a Doña Perfecta personality. It should be noted that most of Galdós' fanatics were women because he ". . . advertió que la intolerancia no es el producto de una creencia religiosa determinada, sino temperamental."⁶

Esther Morton is Doña Perfecta's counterpart because of her deceit and deliberate duplicity to prevent Daniel's marriage to Gloria. Doña Serafinita, the protagonist's aunt, is Doña Perfecta's twin in her role of corrupted faith without charity. Outwardly she is tender and loving; inwardly she is sterile and barren.

Daniel is the youngest son and the favorite of his entire family. His mother follows him to Ficóbriga and there he tells her of his decision to feign his conversion. Ironically, she arrives with Don Angel, whom she picks up after his carriage breaks down. Unknown to each other, they have both come to Ficóbriga for the same reason—to prevent the imminent marriage. Neither yet knows about Daniel's conversion which will remove Don Angel's objections to the union.

⁶ Ricardo Gullón, Introduction to *Miau* (San Juan: University of Puerto Rico, 1957), p. 37.

On the following day, when Daniel meets with Gloria and her family to begin an intensive period of preparation for his baptism, Esther betrays her son. She is so convincing in her lie that he has stolen money from his own father, that everyone except Gloria and Don Buenaventura are duped by her performance. It is she who has instilled in Daniel the love for his people, and although she is not a devout Jew in outward practice, she adheres to the chronicles of her predecessors, and she will not lose Daniel to the people who centuries before had expelled her tenacious ancestors from Catholic Spain. Because he is her favorite son she calumniates him, and the marriage never takes place.

Doña Serafinita, Gloria's widowed aunt, leaves the convent where she has retired after her husband's death to live with Gloria and Don Buenaventura. She is like Doña Perfecta in her excessive outward manifestations of faith. She is a woman without passion except for her religion. Nor does she feel warmth and compassion. Shortly after her arrival, she begins to preach that Gloria can only do penance for her sin in a convent away from the mundane temptations—namely, the baby Jesús, whom Gloria loves fiercely. Doña Serafinita cannot agree with her brother that marriage is the solution. She is openly disappointed when Don Angel agrees to the match after he learns of Daniel's desire to be baptized.

Gloria remains immune to her aunt's pleas to enter a convent. Instead, she agrees to the marriage so that she can have her son with her and so that she can also save Daniel's soul. But the moment she sees her groom, she intuitively knows that his conversion is false. She does not, however, believe Esther's accusations. In a sudden moment of decision she announces she no longer wants to marry. She will, instead, enter a convent with her aunt.

The minute she utters these words, Serafinita rushes to her and embraces her. The jubilant aunt is a little premature, however, because shortly thereafter Gloria becomes seriously ill and dies.

Having made the decision which will tear her from her son, Gloria, in a fit of delirium, sees Daniel paying forty pieces of silver to the baby's wet-nurse. Fearing that the father will take the child to England and raise him as a Jew, she makes a final and supreme effort: sick and dying, she walks to the village where the baby is kept. There, she actually does meet Daniel and elicits from his promise to leave Jesús in Spain. Prepared then to die, she recites the Apostles' Creed, and Daniel vows to believe whatever she does, even in Christ. A few seconds later she dies, convinced that through her death she accomplished what she was unable to do living—the true conversion of Daniel. With a last stertorous breath, she declares: "Mañana. . . mañana estarás conmigo en el Paraíso." (page 283, II)

The irony of the situation is that Daniel Morton dies two years later, a raving maniac in search of a new religion—the only religion—the religion of the future. Daniel committed a grave error in judgement by telling his mother his plan for the feigned conversion. Like Pepe Rey, he underestimated his foe and died prematurely. His idea to introduce Gloria to his god ". . . al Jehova, primitivo y augusto, al que dió los mandamientos y desde entonces no dijo más porque no había más que decir, al que en su grandeza no exige ofrendas de verdad, justicia, y bondad, no formas de culto idolátrico; no exige pensamientos, amor, acciones y esa mirada interna que purifica, no palabras rezadas ni retahilas dichas de memoria," (page 284, II) did not convince Esther; and she betrayed him—for his own good, she thought.

A Glimmer of Religious Tolerance

Don Buenaventura, the youngest Lantigua brother, was unlike his older brothers in almost every way. Unlike them he did not search out the religious note in all his dealings; he was a banker, and he and his family enjoyed them-

selves as much as possible without offending God. "Además Don Buenaventura no había declarado la guerra a la generación presente, como su hermano tenía un carácter más franco, conciencia menos rigorista, pensar más elástico, facultad de adaptación que aquel no conocía" (page 285, II) Gloria is like a daughter to him, and because he is convinced she really loves Daniel, he tries to arrange the marriage for her. When Gloria dies, he adopts her son who becomes the cynosure his mother once was. Don Buenaventura is the one character in this trilogy who leads a normal, happy life, unmarred by religious bigotry. To him Galdós entrusts the rearing of "el niño Jesús, nacido del conflicto y la personificación más hermosa de la humanidad emancipada de los antagonismos religiosos por virtud del amor—el niño Jesús en quien una sola persona lleva sangre de razas enemigas, simbolo en que se han fundido las conciencias" (pages 268-9, II)

The book ends with a conversation between the author and the child, Jesús: "Hoy juegas y ríes e ignoras; pero tú tendrás treinta y tres años y entonces quizá tu historia sea digna de ser contada, como la fué la de tus padres." (page 289, II)

CHAPTER FOUR
LA FAMILIA DE LEÓN ROCH

In both Doña Perfecta and Gloria, social and religious pressures keep the protagonists from consummating their love in an orthodox union. In La Familia de León Roch, however, the diametrical roles of progress and conservatism are joined; but the result is as tragic as Pepe Rey's murder and Daniel Morton's insanity. "La Familia de León Roch shows how excessive religiosity and religious differences can wreck a marriage."¹

María Tellería is the beautiful fanatic who marries León Roch, socially below her because he is not of aristocratic lineage. He is also a free thinker. They both marry with the idea of converting the other. This is the same note touched on in Gloria. María's reputation as a bigot is well known, and even before their marriage, León formulates a plan to re-educate her according to his ideas so that religion will not be her only emotional outlet:

Sí: la haré a mi imagen y semejanza; no quiero una mujer formada, sino por formar. Quierola dotada de los grandes bases de carácter, es decir, sentimiento, vivo, profunda rectitud moral . . ., conocimientos muy extensos del mundo, y la ridícula instrucción de los colegios lejos de favorecer mi plan, lo embarazarían: tendría que demoler para edificar sobre sus ruinas; tendría que ahondar mucho para buscar buena cimentación.²

Unfortunately León becomes so captivated by María's ethereal beauty and passion that he delays putting his plan into effect. Bit by bit, María's fanatic-

¹Richard E. Chandler and Kessel Schwartz, A New History of Spanish Literature (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), p. 217.

²Benito Pérez Galdós, La Familia de León Roch (Madrid: Samaran Ediciones 1956), p. 55. Subsequent references to this edition will be cited in the text.

icism grows until external manifestations of her faith keep her away from home from dawn to dark. Her reasoning is that she must be twice as pious because of León, who puts her very soul in danger. At the same time she is plotting to convert him to meet her religious beliefs. She tells him, "Yo, con mi amor, que es más grande que todos los juicios aspiro a conquistar el juicio tuyo, haciéndote a mi imagen y semejanza. ¡Qué batalla y que victoria!" (page 70)

After two years of marriage, the couple has nothing in common, a fact that begins to haunt León, who despises keeping up appearances. ". . . Ni se comunicaban un pensamiento, ni se consultaban una idea o plan, ni partían entre los dos una alegría o un pesar, que el comercio natural de las almas, ni se entristecían juntamente, ni mutuamente se alegraban, ni siquiera reñían." (page 112)

The only thing, then, that holds them together is León's fascination with María's remarkable beauty. Her jealousy and possessiveness have not abated, and in spite of León's liberal ideas, the thought of being married to another man—even a conventionally religious man, is repugnant to her. "En resumen, eran dos seres divorciados por la idea en la esfera de los sentimientos puros y unidos por hermosura en el campo turbulento de la fisiología." (page 113)

Their psychological divorce is the theme of the book, for their conflict is never resolved in spite of León's attempts to compromise with María. At last, miserable and frustrated, he accuses his wife of a kind of infidelity because of her excessive piety. At first she will not listen to him. In her reasoning, he cannot understand her, and she refuses to discuss the problem with him. She defends her fanaticism on the grounds of her danger through association with him. She further explains that if León were like the average man, a sincere Catholic, but careless in carrying out the precepts of the Church, she would then not have to spend so much time in church praying for them both. "Si tú fueras católico

sincero, aunque descuidado en sus deberes, yo no sería beata. Cumpliría los preceptos esenciales y nada más. (page 116) In other words, she would prefer him to be a hypocrite since that is more acceptable than an honest free thinker.

León and María grow further and further apart; each retreats into his own world until at last León, unable to live with a woman who is his wife in name only, threatens to leave Spain unless María and he can reach a compromise: he promises to give up his scientific readings and experiments, and to accompany her to Mass if she will promise to attend services only on Sunday and holy days. When she demands that he also confess once a year and receive Communion, he protests that in good conscience he cannot do this, since he does not consider himself a Catholic. María retorts that she will discuss the subject no further until he does become a Catholic and share her faith.

But León responds that he can never believe as María. "No puedo tener fe según tu idea. No veo en tus actos ni en tu febril afán por las cosas santas ninguno de los preciosos atributos de la esposa cristiana. Mi mujer parece un sueño, una imagen tan seductora como fría. Te juro que ni esto es matrimonio, ni eres tu mi mujer, ni soy tu marido. Una esposa cristiana quería yo, no una odalisca mojigata." (page 115)

Although María does not want to discuss her religion, León will not be put off. Bitter and angry, his sarcasm is nonetheless without exaggeration. His anti-clericalism becomes vehement when María admits that she herself has not read any of León's books, and that she does not understand his beliefs but must rely on others' opinions who understand the heresy propounded by the atheist philosophers. León mocks her superficiality:

Feliz criatura, que piensas cumplir tus deberes con la practica externa llevada hasta el desenfreno y adorando con fervor supersticioso las palabras, la forma, el objeto, la rutina, mientras tu alma sola, fría, inactiva, en dolores ni alegrías, sin lucha y sin victoria, se adormece.

Te crees perfecta, y ni aún tienes el mérito de la vacilación contenida, de la duda sofocada, de la tentación vencida, del placer sacrificado. (page 119-20)

León questions the sincerity of María's piety since she still cares very much for the worldly things around her: she goes dancing and to the theater, and dresses in costly jewels and clothes; she goes to parties and banquets given by the rich—regardless of her host's religion. Yet she refuses to sit at León's table for fear his atheist friends will contaminate her. She spends a fortune on make up, clothes, and perfumes to make herself desirable only to keep herself aloof from her husband.

María refutes León's arguments with allusions to her confessor, Padre Paeletti, who has reassured her that her piety is pure. He has given her permission to dress lavishly, to go to the theater, and to dance. He, a man of God, should certainly know more about these things than her husband whose soul, she by her excessive devotion, is trying to save.

Seeing that María will not compromise, León repeats his decision to leave her. For him their separation is inevitable since María refuses to believe that he will respect the details of the proposed compromise. Realizing that he is serious, María finally accepts his terms. She is a woman obsessed by appearances and superficialities. She can stand a marriage without love and respect since it is nominally a marriage in the eyes of society, but separation cannot even be considered because of her pride. "Podría existir un abismo, un divorcio absoluto entre sus almas; pero separase! . . . dejar de ser marido y mujer!" (page 129)

Two Saints in León's Family

For several months León and María are able to stick to their bargain. The chasm between them is soon reopened, however, with the arrival of Luis Tellería, María's twin brother, a novitiate in a Jesuit seminary. He is sent home to die

from a psychosomatic disease brought on by his excessive devotion in following the practice of the mystics: flogging, fasting, and sleeping on the bare floor in his cell. His influence over María stems from the mystical tie they cultivated from their childhood. Luis was his sister's idol and when he returned to her house to die, his advice, for her, was oracular.

Luis was a masochist in his dying: he refused to allow anyone to help him dress; he continued to sleep on the floor; he forgot to take the medicine prescribed for him; and finally, he insisted on eating only leftovers intended for the garbage. His unflinching wish for death was a lever which pried his sister away from her husband whom he did not even know but against whom he consistently warned María.

In spite of Luis' animosity, León pays all expenses incurred by his brother-in-law's illness. He watches María return to her old habits and waits patiently. Luis terrifies María and forces her to choose between her physical passion for León and her love for Luis' god. Convinced that León's aloofness stems from his awe of Luis' saintliness, María forgets the promise she made to her husband and looks to her brother for guidance.

As a mystic, Luis loves death; he becomes irritated when María tries to rally him to live. He warns her that she has become contaminated by the mundane and that after his death, León will corrupt her. He exhorts her to prepare for her own death:

Conságrate a salvarte, María; haz de tu vida terrenal un escabel puro y simple para tu subida a los cielos; cultiva la vida interior, refuerzate con una devoción perenne; ármate de paciencia y coronate de sacrificios, porque tu situación es mala, careces de libertad, te hallas unida, por fatal error de tu juventud, a un hombre que hará esfuerzos colosales por apartarte de la única senda que lleva a la gloria eterna. (page 163)

He advises her that in order to save her soul, she must redouble her efforts. She must give up all things that are worldly—her beautiful clothes, her jewels,

the nights at the theater—outwardly she must be as humble as she is inwardly. It is only by her renunciation of the world, coupled with her renewed religious devotions, that she can hope to join him, Luis, in Heaven. She does not question his advice because he convinces her that God has sent him to her house to die in order to warn her of her danger. She listens meekly as he explains that between her and León an external union alone can exist; since true conjugal love is impossible. Because they have no children, this will give her more time to meditate. She must obey León in matters of daily living, but if he broaches religious topics, she is to turn a deaf ear. She must receive Communion daily and pray for León's conversion. Under no circumstances is she to attempt to persuade León through words; her actions will be a guidelight for him. Finally, if he should recant his heretical beliefs, he and María must each enter a convent and devote the rest of their lives to God. "Si ese hombre confésase la religión verdadera, entonces le propondrás la separación de cuerpo, para que, yendo cada cual a una casa conventual de su sexo, consagren separadamente el resto de esta vida mortal a alcanzar la eterna." (page 171)

Luis Tellería's fanaticism stems from his Christ complex. During his stay at the convent his reputation for emulating Jesus' ways was well known. Dying, his words to María ring of Jesus' last words to the Disciples: "Acuérdate de mí, piensas en mí, tenme presente, no olvides que he venido a salvarte, a llamarte al camino de la verdad y a morir en tus brazos para que mi memoria sea mas duradera." (page 180)

After Luis' death, María's fanaticism alienates León completely, and he flees from her—into the arms of his childhood sweetheart, Pepa Fúcar.

A Matter of Honor

"This above all—to thine own self be true . . ."³

Pepa Fúcar is one of Galdós' most credible characters, the antithesis of the fanatics, Rosario, Gloria, and María. As a young girl, she is coddled by her wealthy father. She is cynical and defiant of society and acts like a spoiled brat because she thinks this is what is expected of her. With all her money, however, she is unable to make herself physically beautiful. To lose León to the elegant María wounds her pride, and she marries the libertine Federico Cimarra on the rebound. They have one child, Monina. The failure of their marriage is not dealt with in detail, but Federico knows that his wife never stopped loving León.

By the time León admits his own marriage to be a failure, Pepa's husband has left her also and gone to live in America. Drawn together by the loneliness and disillusionment, Pepa and León discover that they still love each other. León rents a small house near Pepa's country estate. There, he pursues his readings and experiments in peace. He loves Monina as the child which María never gave him. But although both he and Pepa are liberals, they cannot escape social convention. León decides to leave Spain, for Pepa has received word of the death of Federico; and he is afraid his presence so near Pepa will harm her reputation.

Meanwhile, María's parents, deprived of León's generosity, contrive a plot to arouse their daughter's latent jealousy. They insinuate that León and Pepa are continuing an affair which began before he and María were married. They remind her of her own sterility, which she has always considered a manifestation of God's disapproval of León. They hint that León is really the father of Pepa's

³Shakespeare, Hamlet, I, iii, 75.

child and that the entire city is amazed that the beautiful María could lose her husband to such a plain woman as Pepa.

Wounded to the deepest core of her vanity, María lets herself be convinced that she can still bewitch her husband with her beauty. Having disposed of all her clothes, jewels, and worldly possessions according to Luis' mandate, María borrows some finery and sets out to bring León back to her. Certain that God has made her beautiful in order to save her husband's soul, she refuses to admit that her physical attraction for León and her sense of social convention now supersede her religious convictions. She wants León at her side—be he atheist or Christian. She wants her husband to be hers alone and to be blind to all other women.

León is ready to leave Spain when María arrives. His love for Pepa and her child is thwarted by his social conscience which will not permit him to commit adultery with Pepa. To him, leaving Spain is the only feasible way to avoid scandal. He is afraid to stay for fear he will succumb to Pepa's plea that they move to Paris and live together with Monina. With Pepa's farewell still ringing in his ears, he greets María coldly, immune to her beauty. He admits his love for Pepa and his unwillingness ever to return to María. Unable to bear his rejection, María's rage reaches apoplectic proportions; and she loses consciousness. She is carried to Pepa's house, for León's furniture has already been removed. She is put in her rival's room where she lies gravely ill.

After a thorough medical examination León explains the marital difficulties aggravated by his wife's fanaticism. The doctor then recommends that León pretend to be wildly in love with María again and to avoid at all cost any religious subjects. And because León sincerely does not wish her death, even though she is an obstacle to his happiness with Pepa, he complies with the doctor's orders.

María's presence in the Fúcar household creates a conflict in Pepa, who

would wish her rival dead but who finds the strength to pray that she does not die. Pepa watches silently as León is caught up in the lie. Her trust in him is unwavering, however; and she refuses to face the possibility that María may yet win him. Her fight with temptation is real, and her tormented prayers are more eloquent than any of María's confident exhortations.

As soon as María regains consciousness, she sends León to Madrid for Padre Paoletti, her confessor. At first the priest refuses to listen to León's request. He tries to bargain for a true reconciliation which will take place after María regains her health; but León staunchly refuses, insisting that he has agreed to the artifice only to save his wife's life and not her pride. He blames the priest for having corrupted her, for having become the titular head of León's own house, and the arbiter of his marriage. He places the responsibility for María's life in Padre Paoletti's hands. In his eyes the priest must become a party to the lie in order to convince María of its veracity so that she will want to live.

At last the two men return together, and the priest sets about reassuring María that all is well between her and her husband. Three times he makes a reference to León's love, and each time, a cock crows—recalling Peter's denial of Christ. Padre Paoletti tells himself that his lie is really charity and that in time, both God and María will forgive him. His confidence stems from his hold over María, whom he insists he has never before deceived. His word, for her, has always been as authoritative as the Bible. León is offended by the priest's oblique boast, and the last tenuous threads of his respect for María finally break; for he cannot forget her joy at seeing her confessor and her relief in having him assure her that León loves her again.

But León and Padre Paoletti are convincing in their lies, but María's family, that descends like a horde on the Fúcar household, gives the whole farce away. María, unable to face the truth, dies shortly thereafter. First, however,

she confesses and forgives Padre Paoletti for having deceived her. The priest defends himself saying she was ". . . engañada con piedad." (page 474) He listens, horrified, to her preoccupations with León's love for Pepa. To reassure her that Monina is not her husband's child, he says, "El desventurado marido suyo es incapaz de toda idea moral, pero tiene gracias a su cultura, la religión de la apariencia y sabe ponerse a tiempo esa ropa pintada de virtud, que el mundo llama caballerosidad." (page 474) But on the brink of death, María confesses her jealousy. She will pardon neither Pepa for having given León the kind of love he wanted from his wife, nor León for being happy with so little when he could have reconciled with her.

The priest, however, who has labored long and hard to attain perfection with María will not let her die without an act of contrition. "Alma que creí victoriosa y que ahora sucumbes vencida si no perdonas, Dios no te perdonará." (page 487)

Only after a prolonged battle does María finally surrender and overcome her jealousy. To be shut out of Heaven because of such a base emotion, to be separated from her beloved brother, Luis, is worse than eternity in Hell. Luis waits at her bedside, beckoning with arms outstretched. María cries, "Nada me importa. Perdono de todo corazón; me reconcilio con mi Dios Salvador y espero." (page 491)

Seeing María die, León is filled with compassion, but at the same time, he can now hope to marry Pepa, whom he has loved since childhood. Unfortunately, Pepa's husband who was reported killed in America, is not dead and returns to Spain shortly after María's funeral. He has already retained Gustavo Tellería (María's oldest brother) to represent him in gaining custody of his and Pepa's child. In spite of the tremendous wealth and prestige of Pepa's father, the law is on the aggrieved husband's side. Although Federico Cimarra married Pepa for

her money, embezzled from his father-in-law, and never supported his child, his honor has been impugned; and even losing the case, the scandal would follow Pepa and her child to the grave.

Years before, on the eve of his engagement to María, León prophesied: "¿No te dice tu corazón que algún día necesitarás de mí . . . quizá un leal consejo, quizá esa ayuda que los desgraciados se prestan unos a otros en los inevitables sufragios de la vida?" (page 48) When their need for each other becomes mutual, they feel guilty to be content with a casual touch or dinner or quiet conversation. Despite the gossip, they do not commit adultery—more because of León's restraint than Pepa's. It is she who tries to convince León that they leave Spain with Monina and live together in France. It is she who is willing to flaunt society in order to share the happiness she has earned. Her love for León is so deep that she is willing to accept social censure for herself and her child.

León, however, sees deeper than mere social conventions; honor, duty, and morality are side issues of his and Pepa's love, as is the innocence of Monina. He married María with the idea of forming ". . . la familia cristiana, centro de toda paz, fundamento de virtud, escala de perfección moral, crisol donde cuanto tenemos en uno y otro orden se purifica." (page 550) He can settle for no less than marriage with Pepa even though in his heart he already considers her his wife. He tries to comfort her that through suffering they will attain a kind of dignity and honor which will reign in their consciences. If there is to be no justice for them on earth, surely they will have recourse to eternal justice. Patience and resignation to bear the waiting throughout the years are his hope for them both. He agrees to leave Spain never to return, thus assuring Pepa's custody of her daughter. Federico makes the same agreement to separate from Pepa and never see her or his child unless León returns to Spain.

The ray of hope is less blinding than the one in Gloria, but La Familia de León Roch is not completely pessimistic. León's consolation is that he does not choose happiness by sacrificing an innocent child. It is bitter consolation, but it is a matter of honor higher than lip service to María's sterile god.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In our jet age, especially in the United States, where religion and politics are separated by legislation, real social value in Pérez Galdós' thesis novels may not seem readily apparent. If the modern American reader finds identification with religious fanatics difficult, he has only to look at various periods in his own country's history to realize that nineteenth-century Spain held no patent on religious intolerance. And though the past is no sure gauge of the future, it does offer a key to national character and temperament. In our shrinking world, such an understanding may lay the foundation for better political and cultural relations.

Contemporary readers can probably more easily identify with La Familia de León Roch since it deals with a kind of mixed marriage. Even today in our society mixed marriages are not favorably viewed by counselors or clergymen, who have seen countless such unions end in legal and/or psychological divorce.

Worse, perhaps, is the couple who like León and María are psychologically divorced but refuse to rectify their mistake and instead live together, lonely and alone. If religion is the crux of their marital problems, and children are born into such an atmosphere, the result is even more tragic since each partner will probably insist on raising the child in his particular religion. When compromise is rejected, the chasm widens. This is seen in María's and León's relationship, although they had no children. María takes advantage of her husband's generosity and does not fulfill her promise to him with the result that he becomes disgusted and leaves her. Her own stubbornness blinds her, however, and she blames Pepa Fúcar for León's action. His concern for María is genuine; he objects only to her unquestioning obedience to her confessor and her obsession with the ritualis-

tic manifestation of faith versus true humility. His attempts to channel her thinking toward more profound church literature are thwarted by her preference for pseudo-religious treatises dealing with the ritualistic.

Galdós was Miltonian in his belief that untested virtue is worthless. None of his fanatics had ever questioned any aspect of their beliefs (Gloria experienced misgivings which she never articulated and from which she fled in horror). Doña Perfecta, especially, personifies the person who is good since there is nothing bad around her because she controls her environment. Pepe's arrival brings out disturbing flaws in her character. As a Catholic, the precepts she should have followed were those exemplified in Jesus' teachings. Instead she was an avenging angel from the pages of the Old Testament; her vengeance was swift and brutal. If she verges on the incredible, Galdós' technique helps allay the reader's doubts; and we find ourselves thinking that we most probably have known a Doña Perfecta.

Galdós' innate morality was very conventional and Catholic as seen in all three thesis novels. Only Gloria and Daniel are guilty of fornication, and their act is never repeated. That Galdós did not condone adultery or common law relationships is evident in the high moral caliber of his protagonists. Each of the men could have taken advantage of their situations. It is true that Daniel did seduce Gloria, but there is no indication that his action was premeditated. In a moment of passion, his emotions overcame his reason; so the cliché is still valid: his intentions were honorable.

Pepe Rey, too, could have seduced Rosario during any one of their clandestine meetings. But part of his love for her was based on her innocence which he could not defile. Doña Perfecta's accusation that he did not love her daughter was without foundation, but by then she had already condemned her nephew and could not admit that his love for his cousin was pure. Pepe's plan to leave Orbajesa in no way impinged Rosario's honor since he intended to marry her.

But divorce and adultery provide tension in La Familia de León Rooh. Divorce was legally impossible in nineteenth-century Spain. Even separation was nearly as impossible. More common was the situation as pictured in María's family. Her father went for long "vacations" leaving his wife behind. In the mountains or at the seaside, he would meet his mistress who was also conveniently the guest of a mutual friend. And though the Marquesa knew her husband was unfaithful, she looked the other way or noticed not at all since her social obligations took all her time. The double standard was easier to maintain.

León, however, refused to be drawn into such a compromising situation. His dead love for María made it impossible to live with her simply for the sake of appearances. Likewise, his deep love and respect for Pepa, plus Monina's innocence, ruled out adultery—even in a different country where society might have accepted him and Pepa as man and wife. He knew that he would never be able to lie to himself, and so he did the only thing left—he removed himself from the temptation. Tested, he did not stumble; but he was afraid to face the test daily for fear that he, like Daniel, would succumb.

In short, the real social value in Galdós' novels lies in their universality. Although every generation must face some new social problems, politics, religion, and sex nearly always crop up at one period or another. One is not born an atheist, and though orthodox gods and religions may eventually be rejected, the thinking person must first do some soul-searching. And this is exactly what Galdós wanted—for man to think and question and search—to avoid accepting the traditional simply because it had endured—to refuse to obey any authority blindly. Most of all, he wanted Spain, in particular, to realize that "la libertad que deseaba para el pueblo español y por que se afanaba en educarle persuadiéndolo con

ejemplos novelescos de que solo es hombre quien es libre y solo es libre quien acepta la disciplina impuesta por la libertad misma."¹

For his heroes and for the Spanish people, he wanted humility and humanity. He found in the Old Testament one answer:

"And what doth the Lord require of Thee,

But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with

Thy God?" (Micah, VI, 8)

¹Diego Marín, La civilización española (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 70.

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BY BENITO PÉREZ GALDÓS

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ABSTRACT

If a single word can conjure up a nation, then religion must bring Spain to mind. In nineteenth-century Spain, religion played a dominant role in the political and cultural chaos which shook the nation.

For one author, Benito Pérez Galdós, religious bigotry and hypocrisy became recurring themes in three novels, Doña Perfecta, Gloria, and La Familia de León Roch. Contrary to popular opinion, he was not attacking Catholicism, rather he was attacking his compatriots' fanatic interpretation of religion. Their inordinate pride was, for him, a sign of their weakness. They were Catholic simply because tradition demanded it, and their intolerance was almost a national characteristic.

The purpose of this thesis will be to examine religious fanaticism and intolerance as they appear in the above-mentioned works. It will be seen that these themes result from narrow-minded provincialism, poorly-educated clergy, and an unwillingness to accept scientific progress. Although the characters are fictional, Galdós clearly implies that they and their problems represent nineteenth-century Spain. It will also be shown that these novels still have social significance as well as universal importance.